

LINES

To the Author of the Epistle from Lady
Grange to Edward D—— Esq.

BY DAVID DOIG, LL. D.

DO thou, betimes, invoke th' *Aonian* train,
And range *Parnassus'* height and *Cyrrha's* plain;

To thee the *Power* of Song shall doff his lyre,
And dub thee vot'ry of the tuneful choir:
The *Nine* shall rise, and reach the crown to thee

And all the honours of the *bill* decree.

Edinburgh - 1798

EPISTLE

FROM

LADY GRANGE

TO

EDWARD D——, Esq.

Written by William Eekins Esq - a
natural son of Eekins W.T.
He went to India where he
acquired some wealth - he married
the daughter of Sir James Macintosh
who died in Leesonline place, aged
68 - on the 15 January 1861

SEIZURE OF LADY GRANGE.

In Mr Erskine's (of Grange) annual visits to London he had attached himself to a mistress, a handsome Scotchwoman, Fanny Lindsay, who kept a coffeehouse about the bottom of the Haymarket. This had come to his lady's ears, and did not tend to make her less outrageous. He had taken every method to soothe her. As she loved command, he had made her factor upon his estate, and given her the whole management of his affairs. When absent, he wrote her the most flattering letters, and, what was still more flattering, he was said, when present, to have imparted secrets to her, which, if disclosed, might have reached his life. Still she was unquiet, and led him a miserable life. What was true is uncertain; for though her outward appearance was stormy and outrageous, Lord Grange not improbably exaggerated the violence of her behaviour to his familiar friends as an apology for what he afterwards did; for he alleged to them that his life was hourly in danger, and that she slept with lethal weapons under her pillow. He once showed my father a razor which he had found concealed there.

Whatever might be the truth, he executed one of the boldest and most violent projects that ever had been attempted since the nation was governed by laws; for he seized his lady in his house in Edinburgh, and by main force carried her off through Stirling to the Highlands, whence, after several weeks, she was at last landed in St Kilda, a desolate isle in the Western Ocean, sixty miles distant from the Long Island. There she continued to live to the end of her days, which was not before the year 17—, in the most wretched condition, in the society of none but savages, and often with scanty provision of the coarsest fare, and but rarely enjoying the comfort of a pound of tea, which she sometimes got from shipmasters who accidentally called. Lord Grange's accomplices in this atrocious act were believed to be Lord Lovat and the Laird of M'Leod, the first as being the most famous plotter in the kingdom, and the second as equally unprincipled, and the proprietor of the island of St Kilda. What was most extraordinary was, that, except in conversation, for a few weeks only, this enormous act, committed in the midst of the metropolis of Scotland by a person who had been Lord Justice-Clerk, was not taken the least notice of by any of her own family, or by the King's Advocate or Solicitor, or any of the guardians of the laws. Two of her sons were grown up to manhood—her eldest daughter was the wife of the Earl of Kintore—who acquiesced in what they considered as a necessary act of justice for the preservation of their father's life. Nay, the second son was supposed to be one of the persons who came masked to the house, and carried her off in a chair to the place where she was set on horseback.



5.

EPISTLE

FROM

LADY GRANGE

TO

Erskine (Rachel)
x

EDWARD D——, ESQ.

WRITTEN DURING HER CONFINEMENT IN THE ISLAND OF ST. KILDA.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR MUNDELL & SON, EDINBURGH; AND FOR LONGMAN & REES, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND JOHN WRIGHT, PICCADILLY, LONDON.

1799.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Hint on which the following Epistle is founded, occurs in *Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 8vo, 1786. page 277.

" AFTER dinner to-day, we talked of the extraordinary fact of Lady Grange's being sent to St. Kilda, and
" confined there for several years without any means
" of relief.

" THE true story of this Lady, which happened in
" this century, is as frightfully romantic as if it had
" been the fiction of a gloomy fancy. She was the wife
" of one of the Lords of Session in Scotland, a man of
" the first blood of his country. For some mysterious

“ reasons, which have never been discovered, she was
 “ seized and carried off in the dark, she knew not by
 “ whom, and, by nightly journeys, was conveyed to the
 “ Highland shores, from whence she was transported by
 “ sea to the remote rock of St. Kilda, where she re-
 “ mained, amongst its few wild inhabitants, a forlorn
 “ prisoner, but had a constant supply of provisions, and
 “ a woman to wait on her. No inquiry was made after
 “ her, till she at last found means to convey a letter
 “ to a confidential friend, by the daughter of a catechist,
 “ who concealed it in a clue of yarn. Information be-
 “ ing thus obtained at Edinburgh, a ship was sent to
 “ bring her off; but intelligence of this being received,
 “ she was conveyed to M’Leod’s Island of Herries, where
 “ she died.”

SUCH is the foundation, on which the following Poem
 rests. The additional circumstances introduced are mere
 fictions of the imagination.

L A D Y G R A N G E

TO

EDWARD D——, Esq.

RAVE, ye fierce winds, ye angry surges, roar ;
Climb the rude cliffs that circle Kilda's shore.
The tempest rolls along the troubled heaths,
The lightning glares, and yet MATILDA breathes.
Blasting the groves the flame-wing'd torrents speed, 5
Yet glide innocuous o'er this guilty head.
Yes, I have scorn'd *thy* laws, in love sublime,
And glory in th' inexpiable crime !
Strike, strike this tortur'd heart, this den of care,
And bear me from the world,—and from despair ! 10

AND thee, dear sharer of my love and crime,
Whatever region holds, whatever clime,

A

O'er thee may Peace her downy pinions spread,
 And calm Repose her fairy visions shed;
 May hovering Pleasure every joy refine, 15
 And shower the bliss—that never can be mine.
 Yet while my raging soul with frenzy burns,
 Still true to love, to thee she fondly turns;
 To thee she flies, her anguish to impart,
 And breathe the sorrows of a bursting heart. 20
 The pigmy passions of a pigmy soul,
 That move at pliant Fashion's soft controul,
 Move as a prudent parent points the chase,
 And love or court a fortune, or a face,
 Have never robb'd this feverish soul of rest; 25
 Have never flutter'd in this glowing breast.
 No—as the mingling tides of Passion rush,
 This burning cheek receives the guilty blush;
 The wild emotions burst with headlong force,
 And sweep cold Judgment in their swelling course; 30
 Till the calm monarch of the turbid seas,
 My EDWARD, smiles, and all is hush'd in peace.

WHILE struggling pangs this tortured bosom rend,
 The bliss by Heaven denied, Despair shall lend.
 Within this lonely cell, this desert cave, 35
 Again I taste the freedom Nature gave.

From splendid cares and toilsome grandeur driv'n,
I share the fullen dignity of Heav'n.

When the gay Sun his youthful journey ran,
Ere man had learn'd to be the slave of man,
No cruel father's avaricious rage

40

Bade blooming Beauty link with withering Age.

" Go—meet thy tott'ring husband's cold embrace,

" While the tear trickles down that lovely face.

" Go—act the loving matron's tender part,

45

" Then dream of the fond youth who own'd thy heart.

" Though murder'd Love on every joy must steal,

" Go—feign the transport thou canst never feel ;

" Go—vex the midnight couch with many a sigh,

" For crimson folds shall shroud thy misery ;

50

" Go—yield thy soul to frenzy,—to despair,—

" For wealth, that cannot ease, shall gild thy care.

" So shall no pang my parting soul annoy,

" But thy old father's heart shall dance with joy."

O THAT the hour which heard my fire's behest,
Had bath'd his bloody poniard in my breast ;

55

Then had the traveller mark'd the grassy wave,

As the soft breeze fung o'er my humble grave ;

The sacred spot had heard the lover's vows,

Whisper'd with guiltless heart at evening's close.

60

For still, pourtray'd in Memory's colouring bright,
 Rise the dark horrors of the bridal night :
 I see my frowning father's frenzied air,
 While the priest mumbled o'er th' unheeded prayer.
 The chamber with no nuptial splendour gay, 65
 Where a pale taper lent its doubtful ray ;
 Till crutch-borne Cosmo forc'd some accents mild,
 And seiz'd my struggling hand—and grimly smil'd.
 My virgin vows already had been given,
 Imperial Love the priest—the witness, Heaven. 70
 The second rites profan'd Love's sacred laws,
 And Midnight's sheeted spectres scream'd applause.

'Twas you that fill'd the transport of my breast,
 And calm'd my soul to momentary rest ;
 When wan Despair her torch wide-waving whirl'd, 75
 And, frowning, beckon'd to another world,
 You came, alternate sway'd by love and fear,
 To bid a last farewell, and drop a tear ;
 You sooth'd the fever of my burning brain,
 For Heaven and Love were mingl'd in the strain. 80
 " Let Hope," you said, " propitious hov'ring o'er,
 " Point your fond wishes to a happier shore :
 " My peace is fled—fled every transient gleam,
 " For you, MATILDA, mix'd in every dream.

" Yet, when my soul has wing'd her willing flight, 85

" To bask in regions of eternal light,

" Hovering I'll pour celestial Comfort's beams,

" To sooth your waking cares, your midnight dreams."

You said—warm sorrow bath'd that manly face ;

You clasp'd me burning in a last embrace. 90

—The rapid sense of former joys returns ;

From vein to vein the strong infection burns ;

Love smiles triumphant, shakes his balmy wing,

And draws with vengeful force the twanging string.

—We curse the stony heart, the maxims sage, 95

And the cold frozen hand of griping age :

With love, and hope, and grief, I sink oppress'd ;

We lov'd—and need I, need I paint the rest ?

Ye maiden prudes, your prime of beauty past,

Who curse the present hour, and lost the last ; 100

Who long at guilty Love have proudly rail'd,

Safe in the fortress—that was ne'er assail'd.

Ye gentler maids, whom Love could never fix,

Who never sigh'd, but for a coach and fix,—

Who dream of gold and scandal all the day, 105

And yield your fluttering hearts to Fashion's sway ;

Bid the fleet courser smoke beneath the thong,

From street to street, impatient, scour along ;

Then weep to hint that sister's faded fame,
 Whose heart ne'er own'd a *fashionable* flame ;— 110
 And blush, ye wither'd maids, who once were fair,
 To hint the pleasure—that ye fain would share.

HERE let me fit, while howls the fitful wind,
 And paint the gaudy pleasures left behind ;
 Review the troubl'd scenes I shar'd before, 115
 Then shield me happy in this cavern hoar ;
 Recal the vain turmoil of worldly life,
 And bless the hour that tore me from the strife.

THE dome expands—How gay the brilliant ring !
 Hark ! music warbles from the trembling string. 120
 These lustre-darting diamonds glow confest,
 The plunder of the desolated East.
 How many wretches pin'd the livelong day,
 That thou might'st glitter in their kindling ray !
 But lo ! the mighty ANNA swims along ; 125
 Mark how she eyes askance the vulgar throng,
 Where bright in native innocence they sit,
 Grac'd by no charms, save elegance and wit.
 These low-born arts are nobler ANNA's scorn—
 Vain is their beauty blooming as the morn, 130

No pension'd lords, no rogues of high degree,
Exalt to shame their blameless pedigree ;
No plunder'd nations curs'd their father's name,
No fawning courtiers wriggled into fame.

Th' untitled patriots speed with sail unfurl'd
To bless with arts of peace a grateful world ;
To bid th' enlight'ning beams of Science play
On wilder'd Superstition's misty way ;
To rouse to ardent thought the slumb'ring mind,
And shed new dignity on human kind.

135

140

Yet frown not, ANNA ; malice cannot trace
One crime like these to charge upon thy race.

No gleam of fancy lent its ray divine,
To break the noble dulness of thy line ;
No spark of virtue burst the thickening gloom,
To claim the patriot tear at Glory's tomb.

145

—Sleep undisturb'd, unmix'd with vulgar dust,
Ye princely panders of a tyrant's lust.

SEE Lady GRACE her shrivell'd face reveal ;
Two sturdy footmen dangle at her heel—
Each back might bear the cares that load a crown—
Yet, lo ! they tremble at the flattern's frown :
Peevish she bids the stream of malice flow,
And manhood answers—with a silent bow.

150

BID the bold youth, whose heart to virtue warm, 155
 In ev'ry change beholds th' Almighty's arm,
 Sees haughty man, by Heaven ordain'd to reign
 Lord of the world, and Nature's wide domain,
 O bid him mark his fovereign man's disgrace,
 And burn with pity for th' insulted race. 160

HERE proud Oppression drives her victims pale,
 To seek a western world,—or find a jail.
 The icy lord beholds, with anguish wild
 The frantic mother clasp her famish'd child,
 And wrings the hard-earn'd morsel from th' oppress, 165
 To squander on a fiddler, or a feast.

* BUT sure th' aspiring soul by Heav'n design'd
 To share the transports of th' Eternal Mind ;
 The soul where knowledge, taste, and worth combine,
 To deck with every flowret Virtue's shrine ; 170
 Basks in the glow of Fortune's fostering blaze,
 And reaps the harvest of undying praise.
 Warm with the love of virtue, and of man,
 The daring youth pursues the arduous plan ;
 Starts in the race of Fortune and of Fame, 175
 And deathless praise already crowns his name.

Yet why that faded bloom? that alter'd eye?
 Why the pale look of pining misery?
 —Struck with unkindness, that he ill could bear,
 Stung by neglect, and stupified with care, 180
 He views his faded prospect with a sigh,
 And lays him down on Misery's couch to die;
 Or dark Despair close fans the inward strife,
 Prompts the dark deed, and lends the murd'rous knife;
 —Or Madness mark'd his blasted hopes—and smil'd, 185
 And nurs'd the rising frenzy of her child.

Is this the world that twines bright Glory's crown?
 Whose smile is honour, and its breath renown?
 Proceed, if kindred wrongs can yield relief,
 And let me drink oblivion of my grief. 190

THE hardy sailors spread th' impatient sail,
 Ride the rude waves, and court the prospering gale;
 Moon after moon their onward course they keep;
 No trace of man appears upon the deep.
 —But ah! from far the whitening canvas plays, 195
 And the smooth main receives the pictur'd blaze.
 —Eager they rush, the social joy to share,
 And jovial, smooth the wrinkled brow of Care.

Their honest souls are link'd in danger's chain,
 For every passion slumbers on the main. 200
 —Ah no! the mimic lightnings burst away,
 And clouds of rolling smoke involve the day:
 The thunder rolls in artificial night,
 And Nature trembles for her injur'd right:
 Hark! the masts crash:—the rifted oaks descend, 205
 And curses dire with dying groanings blend.
 Cold Carnage sits upon the mangled piles,
 And Murder grasps the wreath of Fame,—and smiles.

FAR from the crimes and follies that I trace,
 Kind Nature holds me midst her favourite race. 210
 * —Escap'd the fever'd world by happy stealth,
 A skiff their navy, and a rock their wealth,
 Rough as the stormy element they brave,
 Fearless they ride upon the heaving wave.
 For them the ocean rears her finny store, 215
 And rustling legions cloud the darkening shore:
 Pure from the rock the dimpling fountains play,
 And wind and glitter to the orient ray;
 Nor haughty Wealth, with proud contemptuous sneer,
 Nor Poverty, the child of Wealth, is here. 220

WHEN now the morning trembles o'er the main,
 Brown Labour calls them to the rocky plain;
 With patient toil each tills his little spot,
 And Freedom pours contentment on their lot.
 O'er the steep rock, with straggling ivy drest, 225
 Clambering, they seek the cormorant's downy nest.
 As up the fractured crevices they wind,
 They mark their dwindled partners far behind.
 When the sun sinking in the western deep,
 Refrains the world to night and balmy sleep, 230
 O'er the high cliff their dangerous trade they urge,
 Below, tremendous roars the boiling surge:
 As pendent from the straining cord they play,
 I mark their flow-descending form decay.
 The solan birds are hush'd in deep repose, 235
 Fearless of danger from their hovering foes.
 The sentinel betray'd, no signals fly,
 And the death-fated squadrons gasp and die.
 Till scar'd, the remnant start with hollow croak,
 And wildly wheeling, mourn their plundered rock. 240

WHEN gathering clouds the blackening sky deform,
 And sweeping whirlwinds swell the heaving storm,
 While far at sea their solitary skiff,
 The faithful matrons climb the shelving cliff;

With tears of love and anguish heaven implore, 245
 To guide the labouring bark to Kilda's shore.
 Each marks her shroudless husband, pale, aghast,
 Rise from the deep, and ride the driving blast.
 —The storm is hush'd ; the prospering breezes play ;
 They mark the whitening canvas far away : 250
 With faithful hearts (the only wealth they boast),
 They hail the storm-tost nation to the coast.
 Up springs the jovial dance, the festive lay,
 And night repays the labours of the day.

THE simple maid, whose thoughts, devoid of guile, 255
 Ne'er pass'd the limits of the sea-girt isle,
 In ev'ry trouble finds a sure relief,
 For mild Religion sooths her rising grief.
 Does cold Disease slow waste her fading bloom ?
 Hope cheers her soul, and points beyond the tomb. 260
 When lightnings flash, on vengeful pinions driven,
 She chants her ev'ning prayer—and trusts in Heaven.
 But me—nor Heaven, nor smiling Hope can cheer ;
 Wrapt in dark mists my future paths appear ;
 Bright to my view the scenes of childhood rise, 265
 But gnawing Conscience blasts their brilliant dyes.
 Though rob'd in bliss these halcyon pleasures spring,
 Each pleasure bears a curse, each joy a sting.

One boon from Heav'n MATILDA still may crave,
One melancholy boon—an early grave.

270

I HOP'D, when Passion lent young Fancy scope,
(For Love will trust the syren voice of Hope),
I fondly dream'd our path through pleasure lay,
And EDWARD seem'd to guide my flow'ry way.
O'er his lov'd form in speechless trance I hung,
And drank the raptur'd accents of his tongue.

275

* "O for some happy spot, some shelt'ring shade,
"Some solitary grove," we fondly said,
"Some blissful isle, in whose enchanted bow'rs,
"With woodbine wrought, and Summer's blooming flow'rs, 280
"Love, fir'd by Liberty, might spurn controul,
"Dart through the frame, and rule th' o'erflooded soul!
"There no unpitying father should intrude,
"To check the trance of Love with footstep rude;
"No child condemn'd, a cold, reluctant wife, 285
"To sink a wedded prostitute for life;
"Gay Hope should dwell in ev'ry passing breeze,
"And ev'ry whisp'ring riv'let lull to peace."

Dear, lost delusions! Truth's too fervent ray
Strikes the bright frostwork—and it melts away:
In Kilda's Isle I trace the fancied shore,
But you and Innocence are mine no more.

290

Off when at night in weary trance I lie,
 And sleep hangs heavy on my wakeful eye,
 Strange visions glance athwart the deepening gloom, 295
 My bleeding EDWARD leaves the silent tomb.
 Shivering, the grisly phantom glides along,
 And midnight spectres howl the funeral song :
 Cold is the tongue that stole my list'ning soul,
 And bade the hast'ning suns too swiftly roll ; 300
 Fix'd is the eye that passion taught to move,
 With all the silent eloquence of love ;
 Pale is the cheek where bloom'd the living rose,
 From his gor'd breast the purple torrent flows :
 Tyrant ! thou might'st have spar'd his guiltless head, 305
 'Twas I profan'd the violated bed ;
 —Yet would I rather press these lips so cold,
 Kiss his pale cheek—his bloody corse enfold,
 Clasp the cold heart, in happier days I press'd,
 That throb'd responsive to my heaving breast, 310
 Than proudly tread in Pleasure's flow'ry maze,
 While humbler beauties envy as they gaze.
 —Fell tyrant ! but when all in silence lies,
 Stern Conscience bids her tort'ring fiends arise,
 See on his thorny couch the murd'rer thrown— 315
 He starts—and hark ! that agonizing groan—

In broken dreams his troubl'd spirits reel :
 He grimly grasps the visionary steel.
 —The restless casement flaps—bleak howls the blast—
 His troubled slumbers fly—he starts aghast—
 Convulsive pangs his glaring eyeballs strain—
 But all is hush'd—he turns to sleep again—
 Again the blast returns with hollow sigh—
 Again he starts—again his slumbers fly—
 List'ning, he hears a cautious whisper creep ;—
 He leaves his harden'd couch—and flies from sleep—
 Shudd'ring he grasps his sword—he fears to breathe—
 But all is silent as the realms of death.

320

325

HENCE, vain illusions ! fly this burning brain—
 Though Mirth must ne'er illumine these eyes again,
 Let dreams less dark my ranging soul employ,
 And let me snatch a melancholy joy.
 Whisper that EDWARD lives—Bring balmy rest ;
 Bring peace—so long a stranger to my breast ;
 O could I clasp once more his angel form,
 Without one sigh I'd meet th' o'erwhelming storm ;
 Hang on his neck—invoke th' avenging fire,
 And in an ecstacy of love expire.

330

335

Lov'd youth ! if still in this dim orb you dwell,
 Accept your poor MATILDA's last farewell. 340
 Receive—for Death now shakes the fatal dart,
 This last sad homage of a broken heart.
 My dying breath shall own my earliest flame,
 And my last sigh shall mix with EDWARD's name.



N O T E S.

Ver. 208.—J'AI vû dans le vaste océan, où il devoit être si doux à des hommes d'en rencontrer d'autres, deux grands vaisseaux se chercher, se trouver, s'attaquer, se battre avec fureur, comme si cette espace immense eût été trop petit pour chacun d'eux. Je les ai vû vomir l'un contre l'autre le fer et les flammes. Dans un combat assez court j'ai vû l'image de l'enfer. J'ai entendu les cris de joie des vainqueurs couvrir les plaintes des blesés, et les gémissemens des mourans. J'ai reçu en rougissant ma part d'un immense butin : Je l'ai reçu, mais en dépôt ; et s'il fut pris sur des malheureux, c'est à des malheureux qu'il sera rendu.—*Rousseau, La Nouvelle Héloïse, Lettre 122.*

Ver. 212.—"The inhabitants of St. Kilda have but one boat in the isle, and every man hath a share in it proportionably to the acres of ground for which they pay rent." *Martin's Description of the Western Islands of Scotland.* London, 1703.

Ver. 221.—This is not strictly true. See *Martin*, p. 287. The supposition is, however, *poetically* justifiable.

Ver. 226.—"The inhabitants of St. Kilda excel all those I ever saw in climbing rocks. They told me that some years ago their boat was split to pieces upon the west side of Boreray Isle ; and they were forced to lay hold on a bare rock, which was steep, and above twenty fathom high : notwithstanding this difficulty, some of them climbed up to the top, and from thence let down a rope and plads, and so drew up all the boat's crew, though the climbing this rock would seem impossible to any other except themselves." *Martin's Western Isles*, p. 293.

Ver. 241.—"This little community hath two ropes, of about twenty-four fathoms length each, for climbing the rocks, which they do by turns; the ropes are cured all round with cows hides salted for the use; and which preserves them from being cut by the edge of the rocks. By the assistance of these ropes they purchase a great number of eggs and fowl." *Martin, p. 293.*

"When the solan geese are asleep, they put their head under their wings; but one of them keeps watch, and if that be surpris'd by the fowler (which often happens), all the rest are then easily caught by the neck, one after another; but if the centinel gives warning by crying loud, then all the flock make their escape." *Martin, p. 282.*

A more entertaining and animated account of this mode of fowling is to be met with in *Pontoppidon's Natural History of Norway.*

Ver. 260. And weary Hope reclines upon the tomb,

And points my wishes to that tranquil shore

Where the pale spectre Care pursues no more.—

Mrs. Smith.

